



## **TESTIMONY TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON RAISED BILL S.B. 948, AN ACT ADDRESSING EDUCATION FUNDING AND RACIAL EQUITY**

March 3, 2021

Co-Chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members Senator Berthel and Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Judith Keenan. I am a retired educator and resident of Stratford, CT. I am also a member of FaithActs for Education and am here to speak in support of SB 948.

As a former associate professor at Fairfield University, I was responsible for supporting and working with teachers and student teachers in public schools throughout Connecticut. So often, I found stark differences in what was offered to students in our cities, especially in the inner city, and what was given to those in the suburbs.

There were always fewer resources in the cities like Bridgeport. Books and programs were often outdated, needed equipment was non-existent or inferior, and communication between parents and teachers was often poor. Para-professionals, guidance counselors, speech therapists, etc. were in great need but not provided in many instances. With regard to the quality of education offered, there was no comparison between the suburbs and the large and smaller cities. This crisis seems to have been going on forever.

Students of color have been short-changed and then blamed for falling through the cracks that were intentionally placed in their path. These students are denied opportunities to fully participate in our society.

When I was still teaching, I found that many students of color who entered the university as freshmen were intimidated by the enrollment process and had difficulty competing with white students due to a lack of preparation for higher education, and poor or absent study skills. However, they tried very hard to succeed; many received tutoring but had difficulty in understanding and processing the system. They just were not prepared, and through no fault of their own. Obviously, this was not the situation for all students of color, but even the well-prepared ones were working through a system that was expecting them to fall short.

We need to end this. We all cry out for fairness and justice for different causes, but the education injustice in Connecticut is an obvious killer that is being allowed to destroy lives while going unchecked. There's no way this is purposeful! It's too blatant. You can continue to do nothing or you can become a part of history by supporting Education Justice Now. I hope you do the right thing.

50 Birdseye St 217A  
Stratford, CT 06615

FaithActs for Education  
857 Post Road, Suite 310  
Fairfield, CT 06824